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SENSITIVE
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DOL/ILAB FOR RACHEL RIGBY, DRL/ILCSR FOR MARK MITTELHAUSER,
G/TIP FOR STEVE STEINER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: RWANDA - INFORMATION ON FORCED AND CHILD LABOR IN
THE PRODUCTION OF GOODS

REF: A. STATE 43120

[1](#)B. 07 KIGALI 1095

[1](#)1. (U) Post submits the following information on the presence
of forced and child labor in the production of goods in
Rwanda.

- Good: Tea

- Type of exploitation found in tea production: Exploitative
child labor

- Sources of information and years:

-- Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia Together (KURET) -
USDOL-supported NGO engaged in child labor issues in Rwanda.
Interviews with staff, May 2008.

-- Ministry of Labor - Credible government source within the
Ministry of Labor, working as child labor assistant.
Interview, May 2008.

-- USAID - Agribusiness Specialist on the Economic Growth and
Rural Development Team. Email communication, May, 2008.

- Narrative: Boys and girls harvested tea, primarily on their
own families' small holdings, but in a few cases on larger
tea plantations. Child labor of this type was more prevalent
in districts in which tea growing is concentrated, such as
Nyaraguru and Gicumbi. Working conditions for children
cultivating tea could be strenuous, with some child laborers
exposed to long hours, cold temperatures, cuts, and physical
strain from carrying heavy baskets. Besides these
difficulties, some child laborers were unable to go to school
due to their work schedules.

Sources cited extreme poverty and parental ignorance of the
associated risks as the primary reasons why some children
working in tea cultivation were subject to abusive
conditions. There were no reports of debt arrangements or
other circumstances in which children or adults were forced
to work on tea plantations.

- Incidence: We do not have figures for the tea sector
alone. Most child laborers work in the agricultural sector
(mainly in subsistence agriculture), probably several hundred
thousand. Of the 1707 children removed from abusive
agricultural work in tea and other agriculture sectors by
KURET in 2006-2007, the great majority (92 percent) were aged
12 to 17 years, with 63 percent aged 15 to 17. (Note:
Children in Rwanda may work as apprentices at age 14 or with
parental permission at 16. The minimum age for full-time
employment is 18 years. End note.) Of the 12 to 17 year
olds, 54 percent worked between 30 and 60 hours per week, 25
percent worked between 60 and 90 hours per week, and 16
percent worked over 90 hours per week. Exact numbers of

children employed in private tea cultivation (as opposed to working on family plots) were not available, but the problem is not estimated to be significant or particularly widespread. The results of a national child labor survey launched in 2007 will be available later in 2008.

- Efforts to combat forced and child labor in the production of goods: The Government of Rwanda (GOR) employs labor inspectors in each of its 30 districts who are engaged in sensitization and prevention efforts against child labor. NGOs work jointly with the GOR to provide awareness campaigns against child labor and to offer "catch-up" education programs to children who have missed schooling due to labor participation. The problem of child labor has been incorporated into the GOR poverty reduction strategy and a five-year action plan to address child labor is in development for consideration by the Cabinet. Post also directs attention to the 2007 Report on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (ref B) and the 2007 Report on Human Rights for further information on relevant legislation and government and NGO efforts to combat child labor.

- Other goods: Small numbers of children may be involved in Q- Other goods: Small numbers of children may be involved in cultivation of rice and sugar cane and employed in stone quarries, but not enough to merit inclusion in this report.

ARIETTI